

# THE SOUTH AFRICAN NAVY AND AFRICAN MARITIME SECURITY

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**T**he onset of pirate attacks on merchant vessels off the Horn of Africa in recent years has put Africa's maritime security increasingly in the international spotlight. Recent times have also seen the advent of the African Union and with it a commitment to "African solutions to African problems." Despite this, African states have made little active contribution to securing Africa's maritime domains. Yet, as the scholar and analyst Augustus Vogel, of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies in Washington, D.C., points out, doing so

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is vitally important to Africa: illegal fishing undercuts Africa's economic development and exacerbates its food security challenges; piracy makes badly needed trade and investment in Africa more risky and expensive; the continent is becoming an increasingly active drug trafficking hub; the growing drug trade, in turn, is giving international criminal syndicates a foothold within certain African governments, weakening their ability to address other national priorities; and illegal commerce (such as oil bunkering, transport of counterfeit materials, and theft) impacts legitimate businesses and world markets. In short, many of Africa's emerging threats arrive by sea.<sup>1</sup>

Most glaring has been the lack of a significant contribution by the South African Navy (SAN), arguably sub-Saharan Africa's most capable naval force. This article begins with a brief outline of the history of South Africa's navy—a history that accounts for some of the

contemporary navy's shortcomings. The article then outlines the SAN's current capabilities and addresses the current constraints it faces. The article closes by looking to the future and advocating steps and measures that will need to be taken if the South African Navy is to make a significant contribution to African, or indeed even South African, maritime security.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NAVY

To grasp fully what we might call the “philosophical” factors that limit the effectiveness of today's South African Navy, it is helpful to have a sense of the history of this force. The first officially recognized naval unit formed in South Africa was raised in 1885 in what was then the Natal Colony, as a consequence of a perceived threat emerging from tensions between Britain and Russia over Afghanistan. Technically a coastal artillery force, this unit, the Natal Naval Volunteers, never took part in a maritime engagement. It did, however, serve with some distinction as part of the British forces engaged in the second Anglo-Boer War, and again during the Zulu rebellion of 1906.<sup>2</sup>

In 1905 the Cape Colonial government followed the lead of the Natal Colony by establishing a branch of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR), commonly known as the Cape Naval Volunteers.<sup>3</sup> With the 1910 formation of the Union of South Africa in the aftermath of the second Anglo-Boer War, this system of naval volunteers was extended to include the whole of the Union, through the formation in 1912 of the South African Division of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR[SA]), under the command of the Royal Navy.<sup>4</sup> Mobilized for service in World War I, the RNVR(SA) contributed twelve officers and 267 sailors, who between them served in every theater of the war.<sup>5</sup>

The experience of the First World War convinced the Union government of the need for a full-time naval capability, and in 1922 the South African Naval Service (SANS) was established to complement the capability provided by the volunteers of the RNVR(SA). The advent of the SANS brought with it South Africa's first naval vessels—a survey vessel and two minesweeping trawlers on loan from the Royal Navy. The recommissioning of these vessels under the prefix HMSAS (His [or Her] Majesty's South African Ship) on 1 April 1922 is marked as the South African Navy's birthday.<sup>6</sup>

Despite this promising start, things quickly went badly for the fledgling SANS. The global effects of the Great Depression led to severe budget cuts. By 1934 all three of the SANS's vessels had been returned to the Royal Navy, and by the time of the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 it “had virtually ceased to exist.”<sup>7</sup> The pressing demands of the war stimulated the Union government to relaunch its full-time naval capability under a new name, the South African Seaward Defence Force (SDF).<sup>8</sup> The service experienced rapid growth, and by 1945

the authorized personnel establishment “had grown to more than 10,000 officers and ratings, with some 89 assorted vessels [all converted commercial vessels] in commission.”<sup>9</sup> SDF vessels did duty in the South African and Mediterranean theaters. In addition, as in the First World War, the volunteers of the RNVR(SA) provided manpower to the Royal Navy, with members eventually serving in every maritime theater of the war. South Africa’s navy was once again renamed in 1942, this time as the South African Naval Forces, and in 1944 it received its first genuine warships, in the form of three Loch-class antisubmarine frigates. (One of these vessels, HMSAS *Natal*, performed a remarkable, probably unique feat: only hours after leaving the builder’s yard and en route to workup training, it located and sank a German submarine, *U-714*.)<sup>10</sup>

In the aftermath of the Second World War the navy underwent its final name change, becoming known in 1951 as simply the South African Navy.<sup>11</sup> What followed was a period of expansion that is generally considered to have been the navy’s heyday. Between 1957 and 1962 the SAN received six blue-water-capable vessels—a Type 15 frigate, two W-class destroyers, and three Type 12 frigates—all purchased from Britain under the terms of the Simon’s Town Agreement.<sup>12</sup> The addition of a squadron of Avro Shackleton long-range maritime patrol aircraft and a squadron of Blackburn (later Hawker Siddeley) Buccaneer maritime strike aircraft to the inventory of the South African Air Force (SAAF), as well as Westland Wasp shipboard antisubmarine helicopters, added significantly to South Africa’s ability to patrol and secure its maritime environment. The purchase of the Danish tanker *Annam* in 1967 and its subsequent conversion into the underway replenishment vessel SAS *Tafelberg* gave the SAN the ability to conduct long-duration and long-range missions. The additional acquisition of three *Daphné*-class submarines from France during the late 1960s and early 1970s rounded out the SAN as a small but capable and well-balanced navy, optimized for operations against other naval forces.<sup>13</sup>

The Afrikaner nationalist government that ruled South Africa from 1948 until the end of the apartheid era in 1994 harbored a deep hostility toward Britain, as a consequence of that nation’s colonial history in South Africa. Despite this, and because of the perceived threat posed by the Soviet Union, from the end of the Second World War until the mid-1970s it seemed virtually axiomatic that South Africa would side with Britain and the West in any future war against the Soviet bloc, serving as “the vigilant ‘Guardian of the Cape Sea Route.’”<sup>14</sup> For this reason, in light of the close historical ties between the South African Navy and the Royal Navy, “the SA Navy was perceived by many of the senior officers in both navies as simply an extension of, and in all but name and administrative function, an operational section of the Royal Navy.”<sup>15</sup> However, the South African government’s policy of apartheid led to British withdrawal from the Simon’s Town Agreement

in 1975, thereby ending the historical close ties between the South African and Royal Navies.<sup>16</sup>

By the latter part of the 1970s South Africa was facing increasing international isolation as well as the heavy budgetary demands imposed by its counterinsurgency campaign in South West Africa (now Namibia) and its involvement in civil war in Angola and warfare in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). This isolation and the imposition of a mandatory United Nations (UN) arms embargo made it increasingly unlikely that the SAN would be called on by the West to play a role in countering the Soviet navy. As a result, in February 1977 the leadership of the South African Defence Force (SADF) effectively reduced the role of the SAN to that of a coastal force.<sup>17</sup> The planned acquisition of two Type A69 corvettes and two *Agosta*-class submarines from France was canceled. A project to acquire *Reshef*-class missile strike craft from Israel did, however, go ahead, with a final tally of nine entering into service, three built in Israel and six in Durban.<sup>18</sup> The strike craft, armed with between six and eight Scorpion surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs) and two OTO Melara 76/60 mm compact dual-purpose guns, entered service between July 1977 and July 1986.<sup>19</sup> By the latter date the last remaining frigates that had entered service with the SAN in the late 1950s and early 1960s had been withdrawn from service;<sup>20</sup> the strike craft were left as the backbone of South Africa's coastal navy of the 1980s and 1990s.

Struggling under a much-reduced budget, by the end of the 1970s the SAN had nonetheless found a niche that enabled it to maintain its relevance. The strike craft were used on a regular basis to insert and recover special forces teams behind enemy lines, and "for some of the more distant and covert operations the Navy demonstrated how rapidly and how effectively it had mastered the complex and difficult task of operating submarines by using them to insert small numbers of men and then recover them on completion of their task."<sup>21</sup> More traditional naval tasks were also carried out. It was proclaimed by one observer in 1985 that "Soviet naval movements in the region are shadowed routinely . . . [mainly by] the submarines. Apparently they [South African submarines] have grown quite adept at [these operations], not least vis-à-vis other submarines."<sup>22</sup>

Apart from the purchase of four small, locally built minehunters in the early 1980s, the only major naval acquisition of that period was the domestically designed and constructed six-thousand-ton (12,500 tons full load) support vessel SAS *Drakensburg*, which was commissioned in 1987. Three years prior to that, the navy's other support vessel, the ageing SAS *Tafelberg*, had completed a refit "that allowed her to carry a company-strength landing force, two medium helicopters and six small landing craft as well as the addition of a small hospital. This provided the SA Navy with a limited amphibious support capability."<sup>23</sup> This was, in all likelihood, an attempt to afford additional maneuver capability to SADF

commanders conducting cross-border operations against the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and the supporting People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and Cuban forces in Angola. This amphibious capability was, however, never used operationally, and SAS *Tafelberg* was decommissioned in 1993.<sup>24</sup>

The period of South Africa's transition to democracy (from 1990 to 1994) was a particularly painful one for the South African Navy. Massive cuts to the defense budget forced the SAN to cut its personnel complement by 23 percent, with effect from the SAN's sixty-eighth birthday, 1 April 1990. Another consequence of the cut was the cancellation of a long-running and fairly advanced program to build submarines in South Africa. The one positive development of this period was the purchase in February 1993 of *Juvent*, originally built as an icebreaking Arctic supply vessel for the Soviet navy. Renamed SAS *Outeniqua*, this vessel replaced the decommissioned *Tafelberg* and proved particularly useful in supporting the South African research base in Antarctica. The capability represented by this vessel was, however, lost to the SAN in 2005, when *Outeniqua* was sold back into the private sector as a cost-cutting measure.<sup>25</sup>

#### THE SOUTH AFRICAN NAVY TODAY: CAPABILITIES

With the fall of the apartheid regime, the African National Congress (ANC), under the leadership of Nelson Mandela, came to power in South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 and has remained in power since. The South African Navy inherited by the new government was in a poor state. The personnel cuts instigated in 1990 had affected both morale and capability, and operational capability amounted primarily to two support vessels (reduced to one in 2005), a handful of small ageing strike craft optimized for the more peaceful waters of the Mediterranean, and three diesel-electric submarines rapidly reaching the ends of their useful service lives (all three *Daphnés* would be decommissioned by 2003).<sup>26</sup> There was considerable concern that the SAN might not survive at all in any useful form. Given the very pressing socioeconomic needs that had to be addressed by the new government and the fact that South Africa was now at peace with its neighbors and facing no discernible military threat, many believed that the South African military would be significantly reduced in size and capability, possibly even disbanded altogether.

Thankfully for the SAN, this did not happen. Rather than "disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate" the apartheid-era South African Defence Force, its proxies, and the armed wings of the liberation movements, the new government instead integrated them into a new national military force, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).<sup>27</sup> The ANC government also launched an ambitious and controversial Strategic Defence Procurement (SDP) package, announced in

September 1999, which focused on purchasing new ships for the navy and new aircraft for the air force.<sup>28</sup> Under the terms of the SDP the navy has since received four MEKO A200SAN frigates, three Type 209/1400 submarines (SSKs), and four Westland Super Lynx maritime helicopters.<sup>29</sup>

The frigates, designated as the Valour class in SAN service and displacing 3,590 tons, combine a modular architecture with an X-form superstructure that very effectively reduces radar signature. Propelled by two MTU sixteen-cylinder, V-configuration 1163 TB 93 diesel engines and a fully independent “combined diesel and gas turbine–waterjet and refined propellers” (CODAG-WARP) propulsion system, these vessels have a sustained speed of twenty knots, with a cruising range of eight thousand nautical miles, and they are capable of over twenty-eight knots. Primary armament consists of eight MM40 Block 2 Exocet SSMs and one OTO Melara 76/62 mm compact dual-purpose gun. Air defense is secured by sixteen vertically launched, locally developed Umkhonto surface-to-air missiles (plus sixteen reloads), missiles that can engage multiple targets at ranges in excess of twelve kilometers. Secondary weapons include one twin 35 mm gun, two 20 mm guns, and two 12.7 mm machine guns. Antisubmarine warfare capability is provided by hull-mounted sonar and an embarked Super Lynx Mk 64 helicopter. (Each ship can accommodate two medium helicopters, though normally only one will be deployed.)<sup>30</sup>

The Type 209/1400 submarines displace 1,454 tons dived and are capable of a dived speed of 21.5 knots (ten knots surfaced). They can dive 250 meters and can cruise up to fifty days without replenishment. Primary armament comprises eight twenty-one-inch torpedo tubes that can be reloaded under way (and, if necessary, submerged) from a store of an additional six torpedoes. Four of the tubes are also capable of minelaying, and the South African Type 209s have been modified from the standard design to give them the ability to support special forces.

In addition to the new frigates and submarines, the SAN of today is rounded out by a number of legacy vessels. Chief among these is the support vessel *Draakensburg*. Two of the original nine Warrior-class strike craft remain operational, now with their SSMs removed and redesignated as offshore patrol vessels.<sup>31</sup> Three small T-Craft inshore patrol boats of glass-reinforced-plastic sandwich construction, ordered in 1991, were commissioned in 2003. The unarmed SAS *Protea*, commissioned in 1971, undertakes hydrographic survey duties, and the SAN also operates two small minehunters, a number of locally built Namacurra harbor patrol boats, and three tugs.

## THE SOUTH AFRICAN NAVY TODAY: CONSTRAINTS

On paper, at least, the South African Navy is the most capable naval force in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite this, barring a handful of fishery protection and

antismuggling operations conducted in home waters and the occasional sea rescue operation, the SAN has made little apparent contribution to African maritime security.<sup>32</sup> Yet securing the maritime domain must be considered to be among Africa's more significant challenges.

The SAN's relative inactivity in this regard is somewhat surprising, given the leading role South Africa has taken on itself in addressing security challenges across the continent over the past fifteen years. Since being welcomed back into the international fold and shedding its pariah status, South Africa has played a leading role in addressing conflict and defusing tensions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, and São Tome and Principe, and it has contributed additional forces to African Union (AU) and UN missions in the Comoros, Darfur, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Liberia. Under the leadership of former president Thabo Mbeki (Mandela's successor), South Africa was also one of the driving forces behind the creation of the AU out of the ashes of the largely irrelevant Organization of African Unity. In recent times the AU has increasingly acknowledged the importance of maritime security. Despite all this, until recently the only direct use of South Africa's naval capability in support of African security was the deployment of a flotilla of three Namacurra harbor patrol boats (increasing to five in 2005) to the Burundian section of Lake Tanganyika between 2003 and 2007, as part of the AU and subsequent UN peacekeeping forces in Burundi.<sup>33</sup>

One notable operational contribution by South Africa to maritime security in recent times, however, involved the Southern African Joint Surveillance Patrols.<sup>34</sup> For one month, March 2009, officials from Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, and Tanzania conducted joint patrols on board the South African offshore patrol vessel *Sarah Baartman*. During the operation forty-one vessels were inspected, ten of which were fined; a further six were arrested for violations of national maritime laws. One of the seized vessels, detained in Tanzanian waters, had on board over three hundred tons of illegal tuna. While this cooperative venture was an important step in the right direction, it must be noted that it did not involve South African Navy assets but rather an environmental-protection ship from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries.

An important recent exception to the SAN's disengaged status quo has been the commencement of antipiracy patrols in the Mozambique Channel. According to comments by Lindiwe Sisulu, South Africa's Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, the first informal steps in launching these patrols were taken in response to an attack by Somali pirates on a Mozambican vessel in "the waters of SADC [Southern African Development Community] around the 28th of December," in 2010.<sup>35</sup> Although information is somewhat scarce, calls for assistance by the Mozambican government and that of Tanzania seem to have led to the



formalization of these patrols. The patrols involve a single frigate on station at any one time, apparently “carrying a contingent of Special Forces and Maritime Reaction Squadron (MRS) commandos to conduct boarding operations.”<sup>36</sup> An unconfirmed report suggests that additional support is being provided by land-based aircraft launched from a strip at the popular diving resort of Pemba, in northern Mozambique.<sup>37</sup>

Though antipiracy patrols in the Mozambique Channel by the SAN must be seen as encouraging, this seems to be largely a symbolic and ad hoc arrangement, and there are questions as to whether it can be sustained. It must, therefore, be conceded that thus far the SAN’s contribution to African maritime security has been very limited indeed. What, exactly, explains the lack of impact of this seemingly capable naval force? The answer is a combination of a mismatch between the assets the navy has available and the security challenges it needs to combat, budget constraints, and a lack of political will.

### *The Capability/Challenge Mismatch*

As its brief history as given above illustrates, the South African Navy has traditionally played the role of “Guardian of the Cape Sea Route,” first in service of Great Britain in the First and Second World Wars and later as a perceived part of the “West,” in response to the threat posed by the naval forces of the Soviet Union. This history is relevant today because of the impact it has had on the SAN’s perception of its own role and function. First and foremost, the SAN of today is conceived of and equipped as a “counternavy” force. That is to say, it is structured and equipped to give South Africa the ability to engage in battle with an as-yet-undefined enemy naval force.

This is clearly evident when one considers its primary assets—stealth frigates, armed primarily with surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles, and torpedo-armed diesel-electric submarines. One can easily see in these acquisitions a harking back to the service’s “golden era” of the 1960s and early 1970s. Yet it is plain that the likelihood of the SAN engaging enemy surface combatants, maritime strike aircraft, or submarines in the Cape sea-lanes is extremely remote indeed. While the frigates do have a certain general-purpose utility beyond their conventional war-fighting capabilities, that same utility could most certainly have been achieved with cheaper vessels. Also, one has to wonder at the usefulness of the SAN’s submarine force: only three ships have been sunk by submarine-fired torpedoes in the sixty-six years since the end of the Second World War.<sup>38</sup> The submarines do obviously have some value in their ability to conduct surveillance operations and support special forces, but this hardly seems to justify the expense of these demanding and sophisticated vessels.



As Vogel points out, this misalignment of operational philosophy, structure, and equipment with the actual threats being faced is a common one in the African context:

Of the 33 independent maritime nations in sub-Saharan Africa, only five—Cape Verde, Liberia (when legislation is finalized), São Tome and Principe, the Republic of Mauritius, and the Republic of Seychelles—have maritime forces that identify themselves as coast guards rather than navies. Yet Africa's maritime security challenges are most often comprised of threats such as illegal fishing, narcotrafficking, and maritime disaster response—threats requiring the technical skills and collaborative relationships with civilian organizations typical of a coast guard.<sup>39</sup>

Given that the most pressing maritime threats facing South Africa and the continent as a whole are in fact illegal fishing, piracy, drug trafficking, and illegal commerce, the most glaring gap in the SAN's current capabilities is the lack of a genuine inshore/offshore patrol capability.<sup>40</sup> The frigates can be used for offshore patrol, but as Minister Sisulu recently commented, "some of our frigates are too big to move around the coast."<sup>41</sup> The two remaining operational Warrior-class strike craft, though redesignated as offshore patrol vessels, are of limited utility, having reached the end of their effective service lives. The three T-Craft inshore patrol vessels have inadequate range and often struggle in the rough seas off South Africa's coast. The SAN shares responsibility for patrolling its waters with the Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (which operates *Sarah Baartman* and three *Lilian Ngoyi*-class inshore patrol vessels) and the South African Police Service (or SAPS, operating a handful of small boats), but even this collective capability falls well short of what is necessary to patrol effectively South Africa's territorial waters and its vast (1,553,000 square kilometers) exclusive economic zone (EEZ).<sup>42</sup>

Exacerbating the situation is a much-eroded South African Air Force maritime patrol capability. Since the retirement in 1984 of the venerable Avro Shackletons and, in 1993, of the smaller P166S Albatross maritime patrol aircraft purchased in the late 1960s, the SAAF has relied for maritime patrol primarily on five ancient, though upgraded, Second World War-era Douglas C-47TP Turbo Dakotas (referred to affectionately as the "TurboDaks" or as "Dakletons," in reference to the Shackletons they replaced).<sup>43</sup> Even setting aside their frailty, these senior citizens of the air lack the necessary range to cover the far reaches of South Africa's maritime area of responsibility. As one analyst points out,

In September 1996 the South African Air Force flew its last long range patrol to the South African owned Prince Edward Island group in the South Atlantic. The aircraft that undertook this flight, a Boeing 707, has since been retired from service because

of a lack of funding to maintain it. Since that time it is estimated that nearly a million tonnes of Patagonian toothfish have been illegally harvested from the area because of a lack of military control over the area by the South African Government, resulting in a substantial financial loss to South Africa.<sup>44</sup>

The air force's Buccaneer maritime strike aircraft once offered a secondary maritime patrol capability, but they have been discarded and not replaced. There is no evidence that the SAAF plans to employ its new light, multirole SAAP Gripen fighters in this role; given their relatively short range, these aircraft are not particularly suited for maritime patrol, even as a secondary function. Some capability is provided by the SAAF's Cessna C208 Caravan light turboprop aircraft, for which three sets of Argos 410-Z airborne observation systems were purchased in 2007.<sup>45</sup> However these aircraft, along with the "Dakletons," are scheduled for retirement in 2015, with no certain replacements on the horizon.

### *Budget Constraints*

The creation of the South African National Defence Force in 1994 was, in domestic political terms, a considerable success. While there were inevitable tensions among former enemies, the process was achieved relatively smoothly, and significant follow-on hostilities were averted. In purely military terms, however, the SANDF has been less successful. Perhaps inevitably, the impressive war-fighting capability that it inherited from its primary predecessor, the apartheid-era SADF, has been eroded by such factors as the higher priority accorded to the ten-year process of integrating the various former apartheid-era forces into one national defense organization; downsizing of the SANDF (particularly the army) and the slow pace at which it is proceeding; the increasing obsolescence of military equipment (despite big-ticket purchases for the air force and navy under the Strategic Defence Procurement package); and severe budgetary constraints in the face of pressing national social and health problems, especially a high rate of HIV/AIDS. In addition, the SANDF, particularly the army, has faced an unexpectedly high operational tempo in its contributions to peacekeeping missions across the African continent.

All of this has meant that, as has often been the case in its eighty-eight-year history, the SAN currently finds itself low on the budgetary priority list. Defense expenditure in South Africa is a mere 1.3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP);<sup>46</sup> this amounts to a paltry ZAR 30.4 billion (about U.S.\$4.4 billion) for the 2010–11 financial year.<sup>47</sup> Approximately 7 percent of the defense budget is allocated to the navy's operational budget, around ZAR 2.1 billion (about U.S.\$308 million). In a briefing to South Africa's parliament in March 2010, a Department of Defence spokesperson announced that this budget meant that in 2010–11 the SAN would be able to spend only ten thousand hours on patrol at sea. According

to a media account of the briefing, “in 2012 and 2013 this would be cut . . . to just 9000 hours. Divided between the operational fleet [not including inshore patrol vessels or support vessels,] . . . this translates to just over 41 days per ship for the financial year . . . ; or about one ship or submarine patrolling SA’s 71,460 square km territorial waters on any given day. Each ship will spend about 324 days in port.”<sup>48</sup>

### *Lack of Political Will*

Limitations in budget and capability, while obviously important, do not alone explain why the South African Navy has not contributed to such maritime security efforts as the multinational effort to combat piracy in the waters off the Horn of Africa. In a briefing to Parliament’s Defence Portfolio Committee in November 2010, Rear Admiral Bernhard Teuteberg (SAN Director Maritime Strategy) stated that the SAN is capable of mounting antipiracy operations off the coast of Somalia (though he warned that this would be difficult to sustain for more than six months and that even a short deployment would have “implications”).<sup>49</sup> To paraphrase an old saying, where there is political will, there is a way. For example, “in December 2004, SAS *Drakensberg* deployed to Haiti with SA Police Service, SA Special Forces, SA Air Force and SA Military Health Service assets to provide logistic support and protection for the South African and Haitian Presidents during the . . . island’s 200th Anniversary of its independence.”<sup>50</sup> That round-trip journey of over twelve thousand miles illustrates the South African government’s willingness to order significant naval operations when it deems necessary. So what accounts for South Africa’s lack of willingness to employ its naval assets for significant maritime security operations, particularly beyond its home waters?

One possible contributing factor for South Africa’s reluctance to contribute to antipiracy efforts is that it has virtually no merchant fleet (the only vessel on the commercial register, SA *Oranje*, will soon be retired). Political rhetoric aside, therefore, policy makers may have felt that South Africa has little vested interest in antipiracy operations in international waters. This view would unquestionably ignore the broader impacts of piracy on trade affecting the South African economy.<sup>51</sup> (The newly commenced antipiracy patrols in the Mozambique Channel, as well as other developments I will discuss below, suggest that this perception that “piracy is not our business” is now starting to change.) Another factor in the short and medium terms has been the continuing effects of South Africa’s focus on the FIFA World Cup, which ran to its completion in mid-July 2010. Preparations for the World Cup included large-scale government investment in public works, from new and upgraded stadia to public transport infrastructure, at an estimated cost of U.S.\$3.5 billion.<sup>52</sup> This included a very significant investment in security, with the SAN playing its part in Operation KGWELE (the SANDF

World Cup security mission) by deploying three of its Valour-class frigates off Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, and Durban in support of army special forces and the navy's own MRS. The frigates also provided radar feed to assist the air force in securing the skies over the World Cup venues against a 9/11-style attack. Two submarines were also sent on patrol, and a number of other vessels were deployed as support platforms.<sup>53</sup> This operation, while apparently successful, absorbed considerable resources, leaving the SAN, already suffering under the budget constraints outlined above, somewhat anemic.

Perhaps more significant is the fact that recent defense decisions under South Africa's current president, Jacob Zuma, suggest a shift in policy. Under his predecessor, Thabo Mbeki, South Africa's foreign policy was driven by the notion of an emerging "African Renaissance," to be made possible in part by a vigorous commitment to peace and stability operations on the continent. President Zuma was elected to the leadership of the ruling ANC in an acrimonious contest with then-president Mbeki in 2007 (thereby effectively reducing Mbeki to lame-duck status), largely riding on a wave of dissatisfaction over Mbeki's perceived lack of focus on domestic issues. Zuma was elected president in 2009, and since then South Africa has maintained its existing peacekeeping and related commitments but has notably taken on no significant additional external missions. This is particularly noteworthy in that June 2009 marked the end of the SANDF's ten-year deployment to Burundi.<sup>54</sup> That effectively reduced the number of externally deployed troops by around a third.<sup>55</sup> The Zuma administration has preferred to commit troops to secure South Africa's borders, reversing a decision made under Mbeki to turn over border security entirely to the SAPS. Currently it is planned that under Operation CORONA over 3,600 SANDF troops, a significant proportion of the South African Army's deployable manpower, will be on South Africa's borders by 2014.<sup>56</sup> Taken together, these factors suggest that South African national policy is shifting away from expeditionary engagements involving military forces and focusing more on domestic priorities.

## INTO THE FUTURE

Despite the many negatives outlined in this article, there have in recent times been signs of movement in the right direction. One has been the emergence of a new, as yet unpublished, maritime security strategy. While the value of this strategy will obviously depend on its content, the fact that maritime security has received high-level attention is itself encouraging. Comments made in Parliament relating to the content of the strategy also give reasons for hope. For example, Minister Sisulu indicated in response to a question posed by a member that there are plans afoot to cover all of South Africa's EEZ with "some form of sensor, or combination of sensors that will produce the most optimal coverage."<sup>57</sup>

Another potentially positive development is the possible revival of Project BIRO, a program to replace the SAN's ageing and limited inshore and offshore patrol capability. By Minister Sisulu's admission, BIRO had been "shelved," but a recent media report indicates that the Simon's Town-based Institute for Maritime Technology has been issued a "request for quotation" by the SAN for "strategic technology and engineering support services during the project study phase of the acquisition of a multi-mission patrol capability." Furthermore, "the Estimates of National Expenditure (ENE) tabled by Minister of Finance Pravin Gordhan in February noted that the National Treasury will fund the acquisition of new ships for the Navy from the 2013/14 financial year," specifically "the replacement of the offshore and inshore patrol vessels, procurement of new harbour tugs and the replacement of small boats."<sup>58</sup>

Further potentially good news concerns Project SAUCEPAN, the South African Air Force's program to replace its almost septuagenarian Douglas C47 Dakota maritime surveillance aircraft. In the words of the chief of the SAAF, Lieutenant General Carlo Gagliano, SAUCEPAN has been "pulled to the left"—that is, pushed higher on the agenda—by the arrival of piracy in southern African waters and is now considered "urgent and important."<sup>59</sup>

While these are certainly encouraging signs, they do not necessarily indicate that South Africa is moving toward a comprehensive and well designed approach to ensuring its own maritime security and contributing to that of other African nations. For one thing, there is every chance that these developments will founder on the rock of budgetary constraint. Perhaps even more importantly, there are worrisome indicators that the new maritime security strategy is an ad hoc, knee-jerk reaction to the fact that piracy has finally reached SADC waters.<sup>60</sup> While piracy is one of the things the SAN must be capable of addressing, it is by no means the only, or even the main, security threat that must be considered.

Ultimately what is needed is a broad and comprehensive rethinking of South Africa's approach to securing its borders, people, and interests. A recalibration of this kind will have to be realistic about the level of defense expenditure South Africa can afford (given the pressing social challenges that must be addressed by the government on a very small tax base) and must be set against a realistic assessment of the threat environment that South Africa is likely to face.<sup>61</sup> These considerations together will likely point to a reduction of South Africa's ability to contribute to peace and stability operations on the ground in far-flung parts of Africa (as mentioned above, this reduction seems already to have begun, under the current administration's policy priorities), but this must be weighed against the impact that a more stable and economically successful South Africa will have on the southern African region in the long term.

As I have argued elsewhere, South Africa should focus to a considerable degree on engagement with neighboring countries, with the goal of ensuring their viability as secure and prosperous democratic states.<sup>62</sup> The primary tools in achieving this goal will be economic, legal, and diplomatic. The SANDF and other security organs of the state will have roles to play as well, through such activities as offering training and assistance and sharing intelligence. The tools of so-called developmental peacekeeping will be critical here, though employed preemptively rather than only when an emergency arises that requires the deployment of a traditional peacekeeping or peace-enforcement mission.<sup>63</sup> From another perspective, this approach is what one counterinsurgency expert has called “anti-insurgency.”<sup>64</sup>

Critical in this approach is, first, the fact that it could potentially have a far greater impact on African security in the long term than the current “firefighting” model (in which South African efforts go primarily toward addressing conflicts that have already broken out). Second, though self-interested, this approach does not represent a shirking of South Africa’s international responsibilities. For as South Africa’s neighbors grow in prosperity and security they will develop both the desire and the capability to sustain that success by seeking the security and prosperity of their own neighbors. What should ideally emerge is something like the “ink-spot theory” of counterinsurgency, in which “spots” or areas of security and stability spread and eventually merge with other zones of security and stability, just as drops of ink coalesce on paper.<sup>65</sup>

Like those of most African nations, South Africa’s military has historically been, and is currently, “army heavy,” most of its budget and capabilities invested in (largely conventional) land forces. A reconceptualized force would undoubtedly better serve South Africa’s interests. Given that a conventional military threat emerging from one of South Africa’s neighbors or any combination thereof is extremely unlikely, even more so from a power outside the region, South Africa should redirect a significant proportion of its current military expenditure toward the formation of a gendarmerie-style border guard (with a secondary counterinsurgency capability) and the development of a significant coast guard—what, together, I call “Shield forces.”<sup>66</sup> The remainder of the SANDF should be converted into a small but well trained and well equipped joint expeditionary formation—a “Spear force.”

Under this “high-low” model, the SAN would have two primary functions—namely, providing a coast guard-style Shield capability as well as assets to enable and support Spear forces. For the Shield capability, “coverage” will be more important than “clout.” Airborne surveillance assets, such as maritime patrol aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles, will be vital for situational awareness of the nation’s vast EEZ. An adequate number of naval platforms, split between

inshore and offshore patrol vessels, will be required to take advantage of the situational awareness these aerial surveillance assets provide. Significantly more platforms than are currently in the SAN inventory will be necessary to ensure that the nation's EEZ is adequately patrolled. Here the navy's 2030 forward-planning process, as articulated in November 2010 by its Chief Director Maritime Strategy, Rear Admiral Bernhard Teuteberg, seems to point in the right direction, proposing adding three inshore patrol vessels to the currently mandated force structure—an increase of 100 percent.<sup>67</sup> Funding indications from the government, however, suggest an inclination toward maintenance of the status quo, replacing, but not adding to, the current patrol vessels.<sup>68</sup>

Expeditionary (Spear) missions would in all likelihood primarily engage land targets, but naval forces nonetheless would have a critical role to play, particularly given the fact that 70 percent of African states are littoral. Recent examples abound of operations of kinds likely to be undertaken. In the first three months of 2011 alone the SANDF stood up forces for one actual and two potential non-combatant evacuation operations, in South Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, and Libya. Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire led in January to SAS *Drakensburg's* being diverted from its duty as a communication and guard vessel for the 2011 Cape to Rio yacht race to the Gulf of Guinea to render “possible assistance to SA diplomats, designated personnel and other South African citizens in Ivory Coast.”<sup>69</sup> A special operations force was also put ashore in Guinea. One might hope that similar situations in the future, if political circumstances and SANDF capabilities are appropriate, will see intervention by South African forces. (It is arguable that early intervention by an African force in Côte d'Ivoire in early 2011 could have saved the lives of many of the hundreds, if not thousands, who were killed in what is now being called the Second Ivorian Civil War.) The noncombatant evacuation actually conducted by the SANDF, the extraction of South African embassy personnel and other citizens from Libya, could well also have involved maritime assets, Libya being a littoral state. In the end, though, lack of appropriate capabilities forced the SANDF to rely on goodwill from the Qadhafi regime (itself an embarrassment) and a chartered Boeing 767 to fulfill its mandate.

What is clearly missing from the SAN's current capabilities is the ability to offer strategic lift, firepower, and force protection for joint Spear forces. The ability to project significant force from the sea is in general of inestimable value for deterrence, dissuasion, denial, disruption, and defeat of potential adversaries, and to the SAN it would be of equal value as a means to contribute to African maritime security and deliver humanitarian and other support to neighbors and allies. This fact is not lost on its leaders, and their plans for 2030 include, under Project MILLENNIUM, the addition of three “strategic sealift and sustainment (SSS) vessels” within a planned fleet of twenty-two warships and submarines.<sup>70</sup> No official



details have yet been given as to the nature of these proposed SSS ships. If, as has been suggested by some, the vessels are to be like the twenty-seven-thousand-metric-ton *Canberra*-class amphibious assault ships (LHDs) being built for the Royal Australian Navy by Navantia, or the similar but smaller French *Mistral*-class LHDs, the idea of adding three of them is probably overreaching somewhat, given their cost (though perhaps the idea is to ask for three in hope of securing one or two). Smaller vessels, perhaps even in the range of the 1,500-metric-ton *Spearhead*-class Joint High Speed Vessel, are more likely to be affordable and may even be of greater utility for the kinds of Spear operations the SANDF might realistically conduct, and are more likely to contribute significantly in a secondary Shield function.<sup>71</sup> Whatever vessel, or mix of vessels, is chosen, there can be no doubt that adding a capability to project force from the sea, even on a relatively limited basis, would radically shift and enhance the utility of the South African Navy's force structure in a way appropriate to the nation's position as a regional power. To add this capability will, however, require a significant rethinking of approach and resource allocation within the South African National Defence Force and the government.

#### CLEARER POLICY AND MORE FOCUSED ENGAGEMENT

African maritime security forces are currently misaligned to meet the security threats they face. They have navy bureaucratic affiliations and training programs but have a predominance of coast guard missions, operate in coast guard zones, and require coast guard partnerships. . . . Accordingly, they are not efficiently organized and trained to meet their challenges. They are also hampered by their dependence upon the poorly matched foreign equipment they purchase or are given. Inefficiency and small budgets reinforce each other, allowing maritime security challenges to remain substantially unchecked. Billions of dollars of fish are stolen every year from a continent facing some of the world's highest levels of malnutrition. International drug syndicates are gaining a foothold among what are already some of the world's most fragile states.<sup>72</sup>

This statement is as true of South Africa in particular as it is of African nations in general. Given the additional need for South Africa, as a regional power, to be able to project force where necessary within its sphere of influence, it is clear that the SAN of today is inadequate to the task of carrying out South Africa's maritime security mandate. There is, however, currently a window of opportunity by which just such a significant change could come about. On 20 April 2010 President Zuma appointed members to a newly devised national planning structure, the National Planning Commission (NPC), which is to "produce reports on a range of issues that impact on our long term development, such as water security, climate change, food security, energy security, infrastructure planning,

human resource development, defence and security matters, the structure of the economy, spatial planning, demographic trends and so forth.”<sup>73</sup>

It is at least conceivable that the influence of the NPC could lead to the reshaping of the SANDF, and South Africa’s national security forces in general, into structures that are equipped, trained, and employed in ways calibrated to the actual needs of the nation. It is very much in the interests of the United States and other members of the international community having an interest in Africa’s maritime security, and in African security more generally, to assist the NPC and the South African government in developing an appropriate national security strategy and matching structures.

What can the United States, and other members of the international community, do? Vogel suggests a useful first step when he writes that

for Africa, a series of threat assessments would be highly beneficial, as no one really knows what is going on in African waters. Many of the statistics frequently advanced on drug traffic, illegal fishing, illicit commerce, and other prohibited activities are at best educated guesses. It is also not known how much activity is occurring relatively close to shore (within territorial waters) or over the horizon in EEZs. A comprehensive survey using satellite imagery to quantify ship traffic would be a good place to start.<sup>74</sup>

At a more general level, more purposeful engagement with the SANDF and the South African government could help to bring about constructive change. Regular exchanges with the U.S. Coast Guard would be of benefit in reshaping the philosophy and operational approach of the SAN, more than is, for example, the hosting of SAN personnel at U.S. Navy “schoolhouses.” Diplomatic assistance in such projects as collaborative southern African production for the navies of the region of inshore patrol vessels (craft that the SAN greatly covets, to ensure the viability of Project BIRO) could also be of great benefit. Other opportunities would emerge, given clearer policy and more focused engagement. Clearly it is in the long-term interests of the United States and allied nations to expend the resources necessary to ensure that this happens.

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## NOTES

1. Augustus Vogel, *Navies versus Coast Guards: Defining the Roles of African Maritime Security Forces*, Africa Security Brief 2 (Fort McNair, D.C.: Africa Center for Strategic Studies, December 2009), p. 2.
2. C. H. Bennett and A. G. Söderlund, *South Africa’s Navy: A Navy of the People and for the People* (Simon’s Town: SA Navy, 2008), p. 15.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 17.
5. Helmoed-Römer Heitman, *South African War Machine* (Johannesburg: Central News Agency, 1985), p. 74.
6. Bennett and Söderlund, *South Africa’s Navy*, p. 17.

7. Heitman, *South African War Machine*, p. 75.
8. Bennett and Söderlund, *South Africa's Navy*, pp. 19–21.
9. Ibid., p. 21.
10. Ibid., p. 29.
11. Heitman, *South African War Machine*, p. 79.
12. Bennett and Söderlund, *South Africa's Navy*, p. 33. The Simon's Town Agreement allowed South Africa to purchase the facilities of the Royal Navy base at Simon's Town (near Cape Town) and to purchase British-built naval vessels. In exchange the Royal Navy was granted unrestricted access to Simon's Town's harbor and facilities. See *ibid.*, pp. 39–49.
13. Ibid., p. 33.
14. Heitman, *South African War Machine*, p. 74.
15. Bennett and Söderlund, *South Africa's Navy*, p. 48.
16. Heitman, *South African War Machine*, p. 82.
17. In 1978 then–minister of defence (and later prime minister of South Africa) P. W. Botha stated bluntly in a speech that “in future the safety of the West's Tanker and cargo fleets will be its own responsibility in the southern Indian and Atlantic Oceans. We have been forced into this situation by the Western arms boycott against us and from now on our attitude can be summed up like this—no arms, no service.” Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 83.
18. Bennett and Söderlund, *South Africa's Navy*, p. 35.
19. Ibid., p. 95.
20. One, *SAS President Kruger*, was sunk, with the tragic loss of sixteen lives, after *SAS Tafelberg* collided with it on 18 February 1982. See *ibid.*, p. 37.
21. Ibid., p. 35.
22. Heitman, *South African War Machine*, p. 86.
23. Bennett and Söderlund, *South Africa's Navy*, p. 37.
24. Ibid., p. 121.
25. Ibid., p. 51.
26. Ibid., p. 109.
27. “Proxies” refers to a number of quasi-independent “homelands,” or “Bantustans,” set up under the apartheid government's policy of “separate development.” The concept was that the majority of South Africa's black population would become citizens of these “independent nations,” leaving the rest of South Africa to the ruling white minority. These Bantustans, known collectively by the initialism TBVC (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei), each had their own military forces.
28. The SDP was and remains controversial, mainly for reasons of alleged corruption in the procurement process.
29. The frigates were initially referred to as “corvettes,” as a political ploy to downplay the scale of the purchase of these vessels. The helicopters are operated by the South African Air Force but fall operationally under SAN command.
30. Bennett and Söderlund, *South Africa's Navy*, pp. 83–93.
31. The strike craft SSMs were transferred to the new frigates as a cost-saving measure.
32. As an example of a sea rescue operation, in early May 2011 *SAS Isandlwana* was dispatched to Tristan da Cunha to bring medical assistance to, and recover, sailors from the Taiwanese trawler *Lai-Ching*, which had suffered an explosion caused by an ammonia gas leak. “SA Navy Sends Frigate on Rescue Mission,” *Mail and Guardian Online*, 4 May 2011, [mg.co.za/](http://mg.co.za/).
33. Bennett and Söderlund, *South Africa's Navy*, p. 63.
34. “Southern African Joint Surveillance Patrol Gets Tough on Illegal Fishers,” *Stop Illegal Fishing*, March 2009, [www.stopillegalfishing.com/](http://www.stopillegalfishing.com/).
35. Leon Engelbrecht, “Mendi on Patrol off Mozambique,” *DefenceWeb*, 15 April 2011, [www.defenceweb.co.za/](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/). The Southern African Development Community, originally formed (under a slightly different name) to promote the liberation of southern African states, now promotes their economic integration. Its member states are currently Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, the Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe; “About SADC,” *Southern African Development Community*, [www.sadc.int/](http://www.sadc.int/).

36. Leon Engelbrecht, "Cabinet: Piracy Strategy Approved?," *DefenceWeb*, 21 April 2011, [www.defenceweb.co.za/](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/).
37. Engelbrecht, "Mendi on Patrol off Mozambique."
38. INS *Khukri*, sunk by the *Daphné*-class diesel-electric submarine PNS *Hangor* in the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war; the Argentine cruiser *General Belgrano*, sunk by the *Churchill*-class nuclear-powered submarine HMS *Conqueror* in the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas War; and ROKS *Cheonan*, sunk by, probably, a torpedo fired from a North Korean minisubmarine in March 2010.
39. Vogel, *Navies versus Coast Guards*, pp. 1–2.
40. On illegal commerce, *ibid.*, p. 2.
41. Engelbrecht, "Cabinet."
42. On the *Lilian Ngoyi* class, Leon Engelbrecht, "DEAT Keeping Poachers at Bay," *DefenceWeb*, 5 November 2008, [www.defenceweb.co.za/](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/). The Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, at its formation in 2009, took over these vessels from the now-defunct Department of Environment and Tourism (DEAT).
43. For the P166S, "The South African Air Force," *SAAF: The Unofficial Website of the South African Air Force*, [www.saairforce.co.za/](http://www.saairforce.co.za/).
44. Anton Kruger, "Defence vs Finance: The Long-Term Implications for South African Security," *ISS Today*, 2 November 2010, [www.issafrica.org/](http://www.issafrica.org/).
45. "According to Carl Zeiss Optronics, the Argos 410-Z is a stabilised airborne observation system equipped with the latest generation thermal imager, a 3-CCD daylight TV camera with powerful zoom lens, eye-safe laser rangefinder, autotracker, and mission awareness positioning system (MAPS). The MAPS function provides the operator with GPS coordinates of 'objects of interest' by means of a high accuracy integrated inertial measurement unit (IMU). Built to military specifications, the Argos 410-Z offers day and night images. The thermal imager offers four fields of view and advanced image processing features, including edge enhancement, local adaptive dynamic compression and electronic zoom. The Caravan is equipped with a removable onboard operator station which is data linked to a ground station, providing the joint operations centre with a real-time imagery." Leon Engelbrecht, "41 Squadron Gives Security Forces a World Cup Eye in the Sky," *DefenceWeb*, 14 June 2010, [www.defenceweb.co.za/](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/).
46. This figure is comparable with that of New Zealand, a geographically isolated island nation with benign neighbors. Given the role that South Africa seeks to play as a regional power and its situation in a far less secure neighborhood, South Africa's defense expenditure might reasonably be expected to be at least 2 percent of GDP. By comparison, Great Britain's defense expenditure as a percentage of GDP was 2.5 percent in 2009, and France's was 2.7 percent, according to "Military Expenditure Database for 2010," *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, 11 April 2011, [www.sipri.org/](http://www.sipri.org/).
47. Anton Kruger, "Defence Budget: Expecting Too Much from Too Little?," *ISS Today*, 8 April 2010, [www.iss.co.za/](http://www.iss.co.za/).
48. Leon Engelbrecht, "DoD R7.335bn Underfunded," *DefenceWeb*, 31 March 2010, [www.defenceweb.co.za/](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/).
49. South African Press Association, "Antipiracy Ops Would Stretch SA Navy, MPs Told," *Polity.org.za*, 16 November 2010.
50. Bennett and Söderlund, *South Africa's Navy*, p. 63.
51. For *Oranje*, Leon Engelbrecht, "SAMSA Wants SA Merchant Fleet," *DefenceWeb*, 3 June 2010, [www.defenceweb.co.za/](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/).
52. David Goldblatt, "Footing South Africa's World Cup Bill," *Focus on Africa Magazine/BBC News*, 4 June 2010, [news.bbc.co.uk/](http://news.bbc.co.uk/).
53. Dean Wingrin, "Navy Demonstrates Its World Cup Capabilities," *DefenceWeb*, 16 April 2010, [www.defenceweb.co.za/](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/).
54. "Ten Years of Peacekeeping," *Department of Defence, Republic of South Africa*, September 2009, [www.dod.mil.za/](http://www.dod.mil.za/).
55. Leon Engelbrecht, "SANDF Operations: 2010," *DefenceWeb*, 16 February 2010, [www.defenceweb.co.za/](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/).
56. Leon Engelbrecht, "3600+ Soldiers Headed for SA Borders," *DefenceWeb*, 28 April 2011, [www.defenceweb.co.za/](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/).

57. Leon Engelbrecht, "SA Looking to Monitor EEZ," *DefenceWeb*, 24 May 2011, [www.defenceweb.co.za/](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/).
58. Leon Engelbrecht, "Navy Cranking Up for Biro?," *DefenceWeb*, 26 April 2011, [www.defenceweb.co.za/](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/).
59. Leon Engelbrecht, "Airbus Military Keen on Saucepan," *DefenceWeb*, 23 May 2011, [www.defenceweb.co.za/](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/).
60. See Engelbrecht, "Cabinet" and "SA Looking to Monitor EEZ."
61. At the end of 2009 there were a reported 5.3 million individual taxpayers in South Africa; "Every Individual Taxpayer Now Supports 2.32 People," *Human Action: Free the Markets*, [www.humanaction.co.za/](http://www.humanaction.co.za/). This figure is out of a total population estimated at fifty million people; "Mid-year Population Estimates 2010: Statistical Release P0302," *Statistics South Africa*, July 2010, [www.statssa.gov.za/](http://www.statssa.gov.za/).
62. See Deane-Peter Baker, "Securing South Africa: A Guide for the National Planning Commission," *African Security Review* 19, no. 4 (2010), pp. 90–101.
63. On developmental peacekeeping, see Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge and Sybert Liebenberg, "Developmental Peacekeeping: What Are the Advantages for Africa?," *African Security Review* 13, no. 2 (2004), pp. 125–31.
64. Mark O'Neill explains, "The Australian counterinsurgency expert Ted Serong was correct in his bleak assessment that . . . 'The only good counter-insurgency operation is one that never had to start.' Given, however, that counterinsurgency is by definition a reactive activity, one cannot conduct it without an insurgency. Following on from the idea of an indirect approach, and informed by Serong's observation, an ideal strategic approach would be to conduct actions to inoculate a society or a state against the development or maturation of an insurgency. An appropriate title for this form of activity might be 'anti-insurgency.' This approach assumes that the best defence against an insurgency is to ensure that legitimacy (the trust the people place in their government) is developed and maintained. One way to do this is through assisting states of potential concern with the necessary skills and resources to be able to satisfy the reasonable needs of their people.

This requires institution building and adoption of a long-term whole of society approach, but need not necessarily go as far as accepting responsibility for 'nation building' in another state. Indeed, if the supported government is to portray the necessary legitimacy and effectiveness for 'anti-insurgency' to work, it is a key requirement that it is seen to be acting in partnership with others with legitimate interests in its stability, rather than as a client or satellite state." Mark O'Neill, *Confronting the Hydra: Big Problems with Small Wars* (Sydney, Australia: Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2009), p. 68.

65. See Ben Schott, "Ink Spot Strategy," *Schott's Vocab* (blog), *New York Times*, 16 November 2009, [schotts.blogs.nytimes.com/](http://schotts.blogs.nytimes.com/).
66. As to the improbability of conventional military threats, the combined GDP of the ten countries occupying the first and second layers of countries contiguous to South Africa's borders (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) is little more than half of South Africa's GDP. According to the *CIA World Factbook's* estimates for 2008, the ten combined GDPs come to \$272,294,000, while South Africa's is \$506,100,000. In the unlikely event that one or more neighboring countries decide to build forces to the point of being able to pose a catastrophic, conventional threat, South Africa should (unless it dramatically mishandles the situation) have no difficulty in addressing so long-term a problem.
67. Engelbrecht, "Navy Cranking Up for Biro?"
68. Ibid.
69. Leon Engelbrecht, "SANDF Executes NEO," *DefenceWeb*, 18 April 2011, [www.defenceweb.co.za/](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/).
70. Engelbrecht, "Navy Cranking Up for Biro?"
71. Some "out of the box" thinking might help with affordability. For example, there is currently no uncomplicated transport route between two of South Africa's three major cities, Cape Town and Durban. (There is no direct rail link—all rail traffic between the two cities must transit via Gauteng—and the only direct road between the two cities, the N2, is relatively poor.) Given the *Spearhead* class's 80 percent commonality with the

Hawaii superferry, the cost of these vessels could be kept down by operating them (when not needed for military operations) under subcontract to the parastatal Transnet as ferries between Cape Town and Durban.

72. Vogel, *Navies versus Coast Guards*, p. 5. On African maritime challenges generally see Michael L. Baker, "Toward an African Maritime Economy: Empowering the African Union to Revolutionize the African Maritime Sector,"

*Naval War College Review* 64, no. 2 (Spring 2011), esp. pp. 39–41.

73. "Statement by President Jacob Zuma" (on the appointment of commissioners to the National Planning Commission, Pretoria, Presidential Guesthouse, 30 April 2010), *The Presidency: Republic of South Africa*, [www.thepresidency.gov.za/](http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/).
74. Vogel, *Navies versus Coast Guards*, p. 5.